The Metropolitan Museum of Art
December 1970 BULLETIN

Esther before Ahasuerus

A New Painting by Artemisia Gentileschi in the Museum's Collection

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At a time when women march down Fifth Avenue with cries of "Women's Liberation" and "Women's Rights," the acquisition by The Metropolitan Museum of Art of an important Italian baroque painting by one of the greatest of women painters, a liberated woman herself, seems particularly apt. In December 1969, the Museum was given a picture of Esther before Ahasuerus by Artemisia Gentileschi (Frontispiece). The painting came from Naples, where it had been acquired by a member of the Harrach family; it remained in the collection of those Viennese aristocrats until the twentieth century. After passing through the hands of several dealers, it was bought by Mrs. Stuart H. Ingersoll and displayed on extended loan in the European Paintings Galleries until Mrs. Ingersoll gave it to the Museum.

The acquisition of Esther before Ahasuerus continues the series of accessions that exemplifies a revival of interest by the Metropolitan Museum in the once-neglected area of seventeenth-century Italian painting. It follows acquisitions of major canvases by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Guido Reni, Salvator Rosa, and Cesare Dandini. As a noteworthy picture by an important Neapolitan artist, it is typical of another side of the art of the peninsula recently seen in the exhibition *Florentine Baroque Art from American Collections*. Artists in seventeenth-century Florence tended to cling to local traditions of draughtsmanship in the face of all external innovations; Naples, more receptive to outside ideas, was the home of a number of artists who showed the influence of the mature Caravaggio. Artemisia Gentileschi painted in both cities, but her art belongs more to Naples, where she spent the last twenty years of

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FRONTISPIECE
Esther before Ahasuerus, by Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-after 1651), Italian. Oil on canvas, 82 1/2 x 108 inches. Gift of Elinor Dorrance Ingersoll, 69.281

ON THE COVER
Detail from Esther before Ahasuerus, by Artemisia Gentileschi

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1. Judith with the Head of Holofernes, by Massimo Stanzione (1585-1656), Italian. Oil on canvas, 78 3/4 x 57 1/2 inches. Gift of Edward W. Carter, 59.40

her life and where she influenced Bernardo Cavallino and Massimo Stanzione (Figure 1), both already represented in the Museum's collection.

According to recent scholarship, Artemisia Lomi, known as Gentileschi, was born in 1593 in Rome. She received her early artistic training from Agostino Tassi and from her father, a follower of Caravaggio. A precocious student, she at first painted in a Caravaggesque style, using strong contrasts of light and shadow in dramatic compositions often featuring large and fleshy women. In 1616 she entered the Accademia del Disegno in Florence, and remained there until 1624, when she returned to Rome. About 1630 she journeyed to Naples, where she was to spend the rest of her life, except for a trip through Europe to visit her father in England in 1638-1639. Until about that date she continued to paint in an intensified Caravaggesque style, which was modified by a personal feeling for the painting of women, a richness of color, and a brilliant virtuoso handling of materials (Figure 2). Then she changed her style. While retaining some of the coloring and tenebrist lighting of her earlier works, she created more specific spaces in her painting, diminished the strong effects of her chiaroscuro, and accordingly subdued and refined her coloring. She was a popular and well-patronized painter, and continued to work in her more decorative and elegant style until her death in Naples sometime after 1651.

These bare details of the life and art of Artemisia Gentileschi do not, however, reveal what has been of greatest interest to historians. That is the notorious reputation she has enjoyed, a reputation that Italians have said is the result of English puritanical scandal-mongering, and that other scholars have said is founded on flimsy evidence. Many of the details of her early private life have been taken from the records of the infamous 1612 trial of Agostino Tassi for the rape of Artemisia, in which the curious allegation was made that the criminal act was repeated again and again. Her notoriety has also been based on Artemisia's fame as a writer of love letters and as a seductive conversationalist. But there are other inklings of activity that might have offended a puritan moralist had he known of them. Artemisia apparently lost touch with her husband, and she probably entered into not-so-innocent relationships with some of her lodgers, including a priest.

Perhaps Artemisia's experience with men and particularly with Tassi affected her choice of subject matter: the most frequently represented themes in her paintings are those of heroines and of famous women victimized by men. She depicted Lucretia, Bathsheba, Susanna and the Elders, and Judith. The subject of Judith is in fact the most popular in all her art; she often repeated portrayals of this Apocryphal heroine, several times showing her in gruesome detail in the act of decapitating Holofernes.

The Metropolitan Museum's painting of Esther before Ahasuerus is yet another depiction of a biblical heroine. Its theme occurs often in seventeenth-century painting — Cavallino (Figure 3), Domenichino, Guercino, Rubens, Jan Steen, and Poussin among many others all painted it — but its treatment by Artemisia Gentileschi is most unusual. The painting is derived from the story in the Book of Esther, in which Queen Esther, a beautiful Jewess married to the Persian King Ahasuerus, thwarts a plot of the councilor Haman to have all of

2. Judith Beheading Holofernes, by Artemisia Gentileschi. Oil on canvas, 66½ x 63 inches. Uffizi, Florence. Photograph: Brogi – Art Reference Bureau

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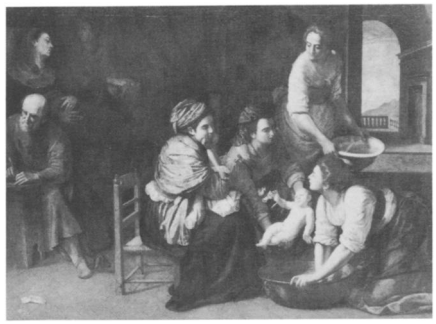
the Jews in the Persian empire murdered. As related in Esther 5:1-2, 8-9, after fasting in mourning for her people, Esther violates a decree of Ahasuerus that none of his wives may appear before him without his bidding; such a violation means death unless the king shows his favor by extending his golden scepter. Esther faints in supplication for her people, but Ahasuerus shows mercy and holds out his scepter to her. Later he foils Haman's nefarious designs and has him hanged.

In Artemisia Gentileschi's Esther before Ahasuerus, most of the trappings of royalty and the overelaborate settings — the grandiose palaces with many attendants — are eliminated, and even the scepter is not shown. Instead the action is focused upon the fainting queen supported by two handmaidens as she appears before the king in a darkened room. The king's face and his sudden rising from his throne reveal the sympathy that causes him to show clemency toward his well-beloved.

In fact the painting is a good example of the drama and brilliance of Artemisia Gentileschi's later style (it has been dated around 1640). Crossed diagonals and softened chiaroscuro unify the painting in a dynamic composition. The monumental figures of the king and queen have been defined with strong highlights falling from the left, while subtle glazing indicates areas in shadow. The brilliant coloring of the oranges and whites of the queen's attire and the reds and browns of her handmaidens' contrast with the beautiful cool whites, violets, and velvet greens of the king's. All the figures, while dramatically displayed, are shown with a certain sort of languid elegance. They are related to similar types in other paintings by Artemisia of the same period, like those in the Prado's Birth of St. John the Baptist (Figure 4). Throughout the painting the handling of materials is exquisite.

Of further interest to the viewer of Esther before Ahasuerus is what it reveals of Artemisia Gentileschi's conception of composition. A *pentimento* is dimly visible to the naked eye in the left center of the painting, just to the right of the group of Esther and her handmaidens. There the artist has painted out a page, whose absence strengthens the lines of the composition, serves to increase the physical and psychological distance between Esther and Ahasuerus by opening up space in the middle of the painting, and helps concentrate the drama of the action. It reveals once again the hand of a master, the greatest of Italian women painters, in an impressive and important late work.

3. Esther before Ahasuerus, by Bernardo Cavallino (1622-1654), Italian. Oil on canvas, 29 1/2 x 40 1/8 inches. Uffizi, Florence. Photograph: Anderson – Art Reference Bureau



4. Birth of St. John the Baptist, by Artemisia Gentileschi. Oil on canvas, 72 7/16 x 101 9/16 inches. Museo del Prado, Madrid

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE
Esther before Ahasuerus, and detail, by Artemisia Gentileschi

Note

The seminal modern study of Artemisia Gentileschi is Roberto Longhi's "Gentileschi, Padre e Figlia" in *L'Arte* 19 (1916), pp. 245-314. Other sources that discuss the Museum's painting are Herman Voss, *Die Malerei des Barock in Rom* (Berlin, 1924), p. 462, no. 117; the exhibition catalogue *Il Seicento Europeo* (Rome, 1956), p. 131, no. 114; Alfred Moir, *The Italian Followers of Caravaggio* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), I, pp.137, 177, II, p. 73. These have been superseded by R. Ward Bissell's "Artemisia Gentileschi – A New Documented Chronology" in *Art Bulletin* 50, no. 2 (1968), pp. 153-168, on which I have relied.

The *Volneratus Deficiens* by Cresilas

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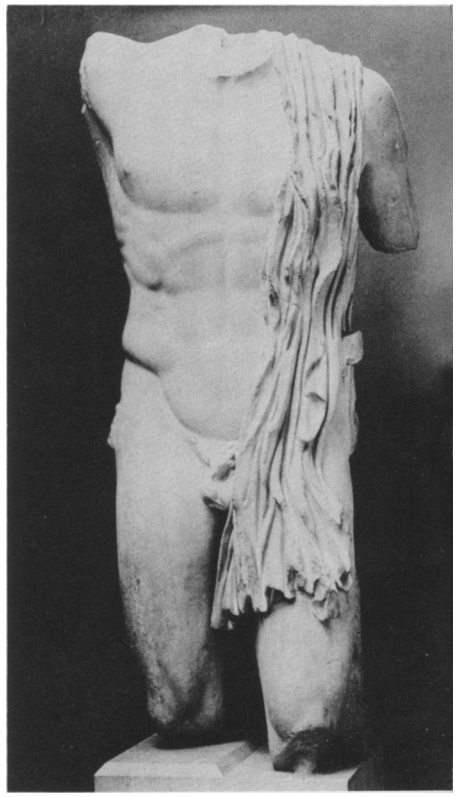
"Everything is a puzzle: identification, motif, style, and date." This is the comment of a famous specialist on ancient sculpture about the marble statue of a helmeted, nude warrior in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 1), a Roman copy of a classical bronze, of which there is only one other, more fragmentary, replica in the British Museum (Figure 2).

The Museum's statue was published by Gisela M. A. Richter in 1929 in the first volume of the *Metropolitan Museum Studies*. Since then various opinions on it have been expressed: the bibliography of the piece has grown to more than thirty entries.

The name of Protesilaos, the first Greek killed on the expedition against Troy, was proposed almost immediately after the discovery of the statue in 1925 and accepted by Miss Richter. It would seem to be supported by ample evidence. Protesilaos jumped from the prow of his ship into the midst of the Trojan army, and the plinth of the London replica, carved in greater detail than ours, includes an object surrounded by wavelets, interpreted as the prow of a ship (Figure 3). Such an interpretation is consistent with an ancient tradition that said Protesilaos was portrayed standing on the forepart of a ship in a statue in his shrine in Elaious. (A coin of this town, dating from the second century A. D., and a coin of a Thessalian city from the early third century B. C. depict Protesilaos, but these representations have no affinity with our statue.) In addition, Kyzikos, the town in northwestern Asia Minor in which the British Museum replica was found, is thought to have been settled by Thessalians, for whom Protesilaos was a "hero-god."

On the other hand, another scholar believed the statue to be Kyzikos (after whom the town was named) himself. Later a different interpretation of the London plinth was proposed: it was taken to represent hewn timber, hence part of a mole, or wall in the sea. For this and other reasons, the statue could represent the hero Telamon, who in fact built a mole on his island Aegina.

Several datings have been proposed for the bronze original, the upper and lower limits being 460 and the very end of the fifth century B. C. Many archaeologists agreed that it was cast in northern Ionia; once the name of a sculptor was proposed — Paionios from northern Greece. Another suggestion was Pythagoras from Samos, who emigrated to southern Italy in the first half of the fifth century. Finally, some specialists favored Deinomenes, who is credited by Pliny with a statue of Protesilaos.



2. Another copy of the statue by Cresilas. Pentelic marble, height 4 feet 2 inches. British Museum, London

3. Plinth of the British Museum's statue, after a cast. 2 feet 2 inches square

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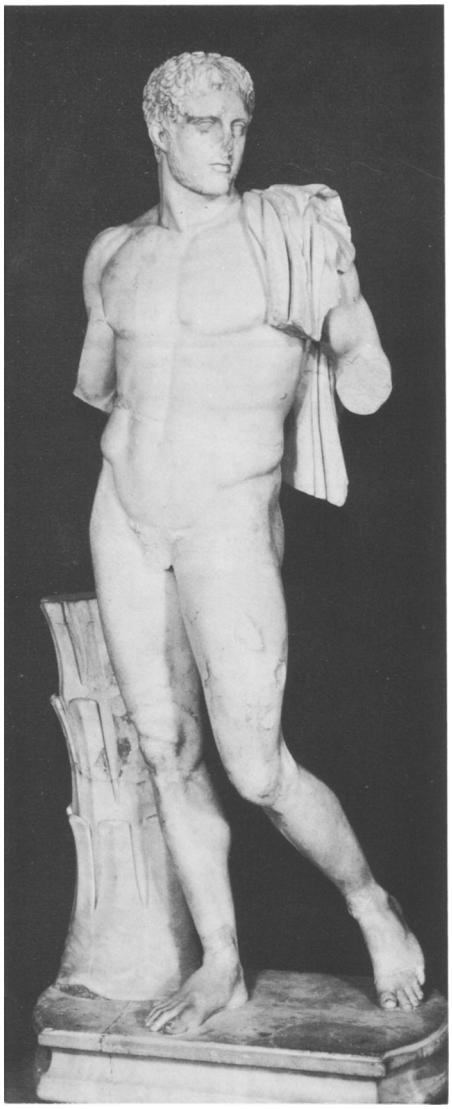
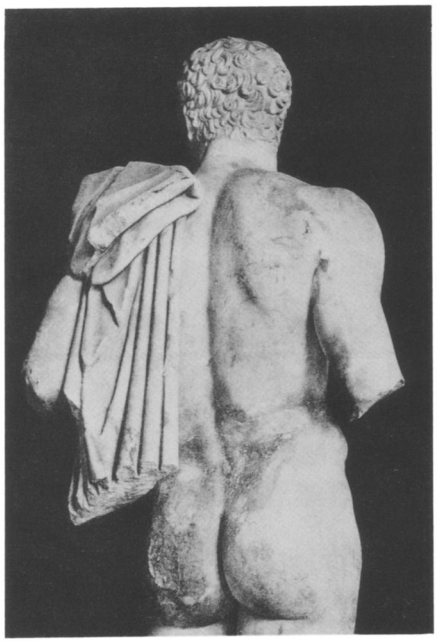
1. Volneratus deficiens. Roman copy of a classica bronze by Cresila (V century B.C.), Greek. II century A.D. Pentelic marble, height 7 feet 3 inches. Frederick C. Hewitt Fund, 25.116



The style of our statue was said to recall the Parthenon sculptures and the works of Myron, since the stance, close to the entrechat in ballet, corresponds to Myron's Marsyas. In 1940, V. H. Poulsen attributed the "Protesilaos," together with two other statues (the Diomede and the Monteverdi youth, Figures 4, 5, 8), to Myron's son Lykios. Recently, doubts have even been expressed as to whether the head and the body of the marble in New York really belong together.

Most of these questions were already anticipated and answered in 1925 by John Marshall, who acted as the Museum's agent in the purchase. In his letters to Edward Robinson, director of the Museum at that time, he gave a detailed account of the statue with many valuable observations. He reported that the head and the statue were found separately on the same spot on the Ostia Railway, outside the Porta San Paolo near Rome, and, though there is no real join between them, they belong together. In support of this he remarked that both are from the same Pentelic marble, the patina and the discoloration being identical, and that while the pubes is mostly gone, what little is left agrees with the curls of the hair on the head. In his words, "The statue represents a warrior falling backward, a *volneratus deficiens,* its original belonging to the period about 430 B. C., the time of Cresilas. Of course, Cresilas's name is better left out until the head can be carefully compared with the Berlin Amazon and the Pericles."

4. The Diomede. Copy of a classical bronze by Cresilas. Marble, height 5 feet 9⅞ inches. Museo Nazionale, Naples. Photograph: Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Campania, Naples

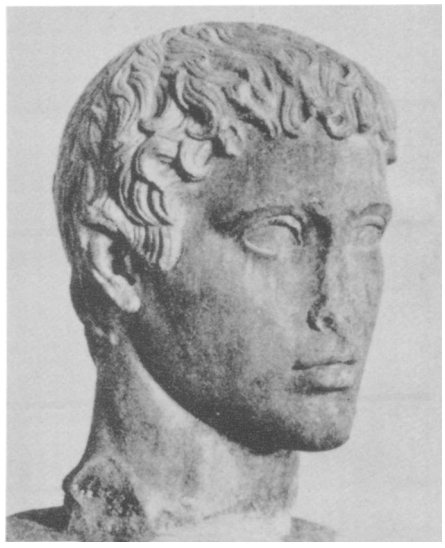


5. Back of the Diomede. Reproduced from Il Diomede di Cuma by Amedeo Maiuri (Rome, n.d.). Photograph: Taylor & Dull

6. Back of the British Museum's statue

7. Head of the Museum's statue

8. The Monteverdi youth. Copy of a classical bronze by Cresilas. Marble, height 10⅝ inches. Complete replicas of this work are in the National Museum of Rome (Terme Museum), and in The Cleveland Museum of Art. Archaeological Museum, Corinth. Reproduced from Results of Excavations Conducted by The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Vol. 9, Sculpture 1896-1923, by Franklin P. Johnson (Cambridge, Mass., 1931). Photograph: Taylor & Dull



Marshall's identification was mentioned without his name in a footnote to the 1929 article, but it was rejected for two reasons: "There is nowhere any sign of a wound and the right arm is evidently raised in violent action."

During a former restoration, the warrior was equipped with a spear poised for attack, but one archaeologist observed that the weapon must have been more perpendicular. The preserved part of the right hand (Figure 9) certainly does appear to invalidate the spear-throwing pose: the wrist is bent quite sharply downward, while the thumb continues the direction of the forearm, both indicating that the warrior was leaning on the spear. The direction of the lines in the palm confirms this contention (Figure 11).

The warrior is leaning on the spear because he is, in fact, wounded. On the dorsal half of the right armpit, there is a horizontal incision that can only represent a wound (Figure 9). The injury came from below: the upper lip of the wound is slightly protruding, and if the arm were not raised, it would surely overlap. It is a little more than an inch long. Perhaps it went unnoticed because it lacks the drops of blood in relief usual in ancient sculpture. Here they were merely painted on and have, of course, long since disappeared. The barely perceptible gash recalls a scene in *Romeo and Juliet:*

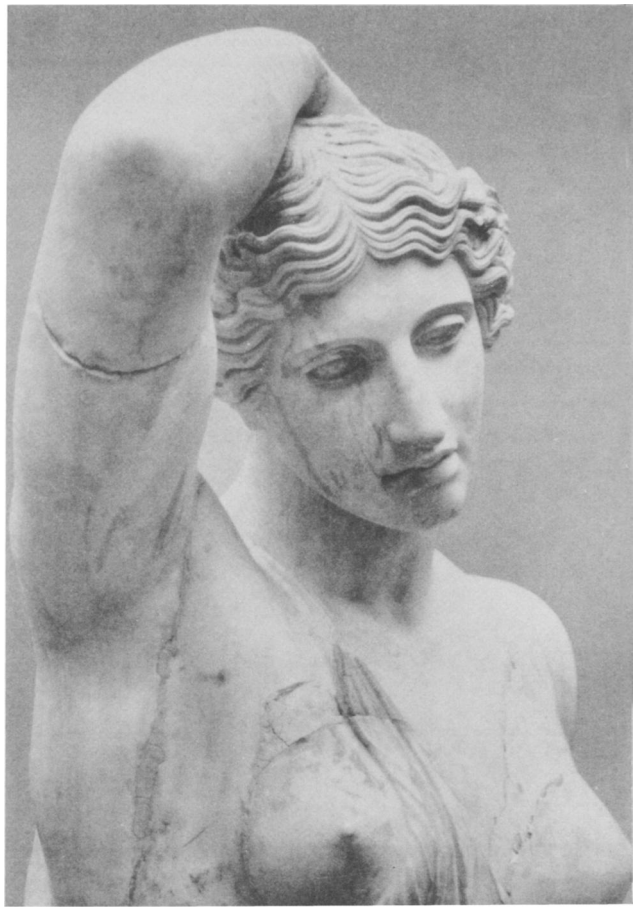
> *Romeo:* The hurt cannot be much.
>
> *Mercutio:* No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.

Shakespeare's words apply well to our man and call to mind Pliny's comment on the wounded, collapsing warrior *(volneratus deficiens)* by Cresilas, "How little life remains in him." Considered without prejudice, the warrior's stance can only mean that he is trying to keep from falling backward.

There is one parallel for the unusual wound on the New York statue: as Dietrich von Bothmer pointed out, the replica in Copenhagen of the Amazon leaning on a post (Figure 10) also has a simple, short incision close to her right breast, although other replicas of the same work have a standardized, more detailed wound. The Copenhagen Amazon also had painted drops of blood.

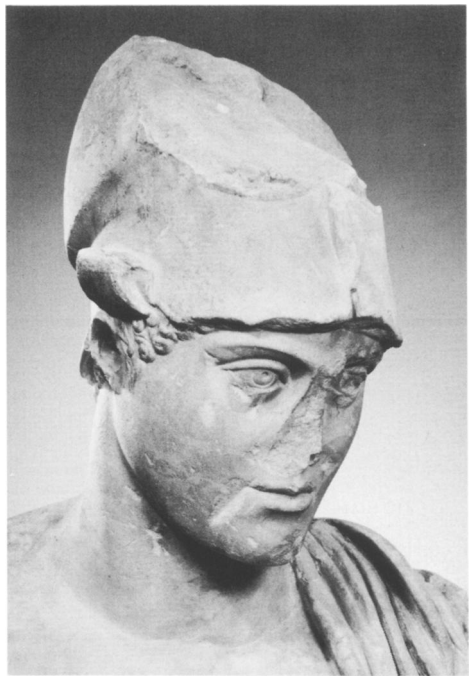
Nor is this the only resemblance: the treatment of the drapery is similar and the proportions of the face are the same. The workmanship suggests that both copies were executed before the middle of the second century A. D. and that the same master — Cresilas — created the originals in the second half of the fifth century B. C.

9. Detail of the Museum's statue



10. Amazon. Copy of a classical bronze by Cresilas. Pentelic marble, height 6 feet 4 3/8 inches. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Reproduced from Die Amazone des Cresilas by V. H. Poulsen (Bremen, 1951). Photograph: Taylor & Dull

11. Palm of the Museum's statue



LEFT

12. Pericles. Roman copy of a classical bronze by Cresilas. Marble, height 15¼ inches. Museum of Sculpture, The Vatican Museum, Rome. Reproduced from Griechische und Römische Porträts, ed. by Friedrich Bruckmann (Munich, 1891-1939). Photograph: Taylor & Dull

RIGHT

13. Head of the Museum's statue

The only work of Cresilas identified beyond any doubt, his Pericles, is preserved in Roman copies (Figure 12). The circular curls in his beard reappear in the hair of the *volneratus*. Both faces radiate that quality for which Cresilas's art was famous: in the words of Pliny, it "makes noble men still more noble."

A comparison of our *volneratus* with the Diomede and the Monteverdi youth seems to bear out V. H. Poulsen's conclusion that the three sculptures are by a single artist. In our statue and the Diomede, we see the same composition and the same rendering of male anatomy. Similarly, the Monteverdi youth, the original of which must have been a victorious boy athlete, is clearly related to the Diomede and the *volneratus*. His head is even closer to the latter than to the former.

Thus, if the bronze original of the Museum's statue was indeed the work of Cresilas, and if we accept Poulsen's argument that our *volneratus,* the Diomede, and the Monteverdi youth were made by the same hand, then Adolf Furtwängler's inspired 1893 attribution of the Diomede to Cresilas receives welcome confirmation.

At the same time, the closeness of the head and body of the New York statue to those of the Diomede — whose head was never detached — brushes aside the doubts that the parts of the Museum's piece belong to each other. Furthermore, a detailed petrographical study confirmed positively that they are from the same block of marble. On the occasion of the examination, the restoration of the statue was improved: the neck was extended one inch so it agrees better with the proportions of the entire figure.

We now gain a fuller view of Cresilas. Among the works mentioned, the Monteverdi youth, with its conservative features, may be the earliest, from

about 440 B. C. The *volneratus* would be from the middle of the thirties, and the Diomede later in the same decade. The Amazon, made for the sanctuary of Artemis in Ephesos, must date about 430 B. C. The statue of Pericles was erected on the Acropolis not long after the death of the great statesman in 429 B. C.

As to whom the *volneratus deficiens* may be, late in the second century A. D., Pausanias, who traveled and described monuments and curiosities of ancient Greece, saw close to the entrance of the Acropolis a bronze statue of the Athenian Dieitrephes, shot through with arrows. Pausanias's statements are not always trustworthy, but in this case the inscribed base, with a dedication by Dieitrephes's son and Cresilas's signature, fortunately has survived. In 1840, Ludwig Ross proposed that the *volneratus deficiens* included by Pliny in his account of Cresilas and this signed work representing Dieitrephes might be one and the same sculpture. About a hundred years later, in 1949, Anthony Raubitschek tentatively connected the original of the New York figure with the statue base on the Acropolis that bears the signature of Cresilas. The noble face of the sculpture in New York, with something personal in the features, may well be another highly idealized portrait like the "Olympian" Pericles.

Clues linking famous Greek sculptors with particular works have been systematically sought by generations of archaeologists and art historians, and the chances for making novel and more secure identifications are slim indeed. In the case of the New York statue, however, John Marshall's guess has been convincingly vindicated by the evidence of the piece itself.

Bibliography

In addition to her basic publication of the Museum's statue in *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 1 (Metropolitan Museum, 1928-1929), pp. 187-200, Gisela M. A. Richter discussed and illustrated it and gave an extensive bibliography in *Catalogue of Greek Sculptures* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 22-23.

A chronological list of additional references follows: E. Buschor, *Philologus* 86 (1931), p. 426; V. Müller, *BrBr* 774/5 (1938), p. 13; V. H. Poulsen, *Acta Archaeologica* 11 (1940), pp. 30-31; M. Bieber, *American Journal of Philology* 68 (1947), p. 89; A. E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), pp. 143-144, 510; G. M. A. Richter, *The Sculpture and Sculptors of the Greeks* (3rd rev. ed., New Haven, 1950), p. 236, n. 152; G. Lippold, *Griechische Plastik* (Munich, 1950), p. 130, n. 12; E. Blanco, *Catalogo de escultura, Museo del Prado* (Madrid, 1957), p. 59, no. 72 E; W. H. Schuchhardt, *Gnomon* 30 (1958), p. 486; D. von Bothmer, *Greek and Roman Art* (Metropolitan Museum, Guide to the Collections, 1964), pp. 17-18; E. Paribeni, "Protesilao" in *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica,* 6 (Rome, 1965), pp. 494-495, figure 560; D. Arnold, *Die Polykletnachfolge* (Berlin, 1969), p. 7, n. 30; W. Fuchs, *Die Skulptur der Griechen* (Munich, 1969), pp. 92-93, figure 26.

Ingres to M. Leblanc

An Unpublished Letter

HANS NAEF

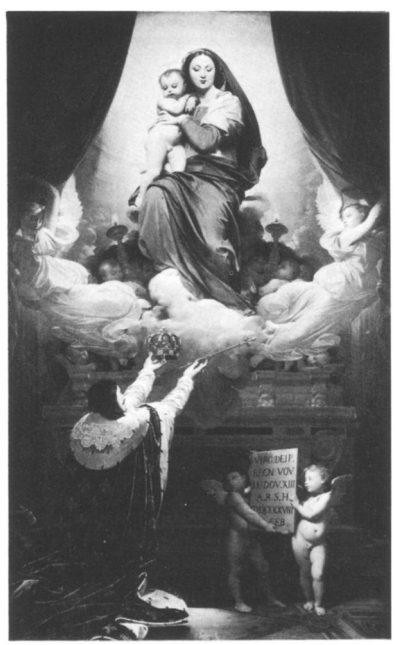
In the summer of 1820, Ingres received a commission to depict an event from religious history, The Vow of Louis XIII, for the cathedral of his home town, Montauban. He had just moved from Rome to Florence and was nearly without any means of support. During the next four impoverished years, which he spent in Florence, he worked with utmost concentration and energy on this picture, with which he intended to try once more to win the favor of a supporting public and thus secure a decent existence. The life that he was obliged to lead in the meantime, however, was all the more deprived.

Foremost among the few who stood by him with action and advice during these difficult Florentine years were Jacques-Louis Leblanc and his wife. The painter repaid them for their friendship with a number of his works. The Metropolitan Museum now owns the portraits of M. and Mme Leblanc (Figures 1, 2), and the Louvre and the Musée Bonnat in Bayonne both possess several drawings representing the Leblancs and their children Félix and Isaure (Figures 3-6). In a 1966 article I succeeded in identifying these people for the first time. M. Leblanc was a Frenchman who had become rich in the service of the Grand Duchess Elisa Baciocchi; he had such a high opinion of Ingres's talents that he became one of the painter's most important patrons in Florence. The two portraits in the Metropolitan are among the few works that helped the artist to keep his head above water during those years. M. Leblanc's admirable artistic discernment is apparent from the fact that he discovered in the artist's studio a picture of Venus Anadyomene, begun in Rome, which he passionately wanted to see finished and to acquire for himself (Figure 7). Yet he put this desire second to the best interests of Ingres and waited patiently for him to complete The Vow of Louis XIII (Figure 8).

Ingres traveled to Paris in October 1824 with his great history picture in order to exhibit it in the Salon. It was this work that finally opened the eyes of the Paris public, and Ingres found himself, as if by magic, hailed as the first painter of the day. The first official recognition was the Cross of the Legion of Honor, presented to Ingres at the Louvre on January 15, 1825, by Charles X (Figure 10). In February 1825, he was nominated to be a member of the Institute, but he waived his votes in favor of his friend, history painter Charles Thévenin. Important commissions opened the prospect of a secure future at home, and he did not have to return to his poverty-stricken existence in Florence. He asked his wife, who for financial reasons had remained in Florence, to join him in Paris

7. Venus Anadyomene, by Ingres. Ingres did not finish this painting unitl 1848, two years after M. Leblanc's death. Oil on canvas, 64 3/16 x 36 1/4 inches. Musée Condé, Chantilly. Photograph: © Conzett & Huber, Zurich

8. The Vow of Louis XIII, by Ingres. Oil on canvas, 13 feet 9¾ inches x 8 feet 7⅛ inches. Cathedral of Montauban. Photograph: Foto Hinz, Basel; © Conzett & Huber, Zurich



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RIGHT

1, 2. M. and Mme Leblanc, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), French. Both oil on canvas; M. Leblanc 47⅝ x 37⅝ inches; Mme Leblanc, dated 1823, 47 x 36½ inches. Purchase, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, 19.77.1,2

LEFT

3. Mme Leblanc, by Ingres. Dated 1822. Drawing, pencil on paper, 18 x 13¾ inches. Louvre, Paris. Photograph: Photo Lanièpce, Paris; © Conzett & Huber, Zurich

4. M. Leblanc, by Ingres. Dated March 9, 1823. Drawing, pencil on paper, 18 x 13 15/16 inches. Louvre, Paris. Photograph: Photo Lanièpce, Paris; © Conzett & Huber, Zurich

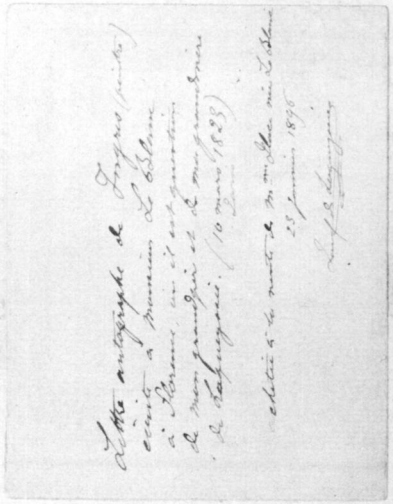
BELOW

5. Félix, the son of the Leblancs, born 1813, by Ingres. Dated 1823. Drawing, pencil on paper, 15½ x 11½ inches. Louvre, Paris. Photograph: Photo Lanièpce, Paris; © Conzett & Huber, Zurich

6. Isaure, younger of two daughters of the Leblancs, born 1818, by Ingres. Dated 1834. Drawing, pencil on paper, 12½ x 9¼ inches. Musée Bonnat, Bayonne. Photograph: Foto Hinz, Basel; © Conzett & Huber, Zurich

Paris ce 16 mars 1873.

Mon Monsieur et bien bon ami.



J'ai bien tardé d'être vrai à répondre à tout ce que votre bonne lettre renferme pour moi d'amitié et d'une attention à la quelle j'attache le plus grand prix. je ne pourrai jamais vous rendre comme elle me rend heureux, vous exprimer, cher monsieur, tout cet intérêt et cet attachement et la plus honorable et la plus heureuse pensée de ma vie. Soyez assez bon aussi pour excuser mon retard, à vous en exprimer toute ma reconnaissance, toujours occasionné par la vie fatigante tumultueuse et affairée que je mène à Paris et qui ne laisse encore à peine le temps de me reconnaître et être en peu à moi, à vous et à mes chers souvenirs de bonne Florence, car je vis et ferai toute ma vie et à tous les instants, notre bien attaché Jurgens. Comme vous le connaissez, et savez quel est, pour vous, et tout ce qui vous touche, et mon cœur, ma mémoire, mes yeux et oreilles sont toujours chez vous et avec vous.

La personne qui vous remet cette lettre, est M^r^ Decailleux Secrétaire Général du Musée, et traducteur de la belle ouvrage de Morosmandé. d'après ce qui sait de votre personne et de tout le bien que vous voulez bien me porter, il désire avoir l'honneur de faire votre connaissance à Florence où il veut en visite pour de tout ce qu'elle renferme de remarquable des les arts, et sans compter son mérite personnel dont vous serez bon juge, et aura encore près de vous, si je ne me trompe, celui d'être, et d'avoir été pour moi dans ces dernières occasions tout à fait le mien, par toute sorte de bons offices qui m'a rendus dans sa place, et de cause à que le peu que je peux valoir à inspiré un vif intérêt. et comme je sais que dans la société des notres bien chers Mouvins, ce dont je vous suis bien reconnaissant je désire que par ces différents moyens la connaissance de M^r^

Decailleux ne peut que vous être agréable.

ma bonne femme m'est bien heureusement arrivée, et vous pouvez bien quelle a été bien questionnée sur tout ce qui vous touche en particulier, vous savez toujours au fond de votre pensée, comme l'oiseau sur la branche son nom, que l'appris d'être enfin logé de maison et bien, à la vérité, grand comme je n'en ai pas encore mais à la vigueur je puis m'attendre et une contenance d'un médiocre — ma situation dans le corps de la Conservation et toujours des mêmes et stables, j'ai la croix, et lui, je le dire sur le champ de bataille — trois grands et beaux ouvrages d'autres moyens travaux comme je les veux — et un avenir sur et honorable — à propos, je tiens à ce que vous sachiez que si le journaux avoient pu dire ce qui s'est passé dans la séance de la Musée pour le roi, et avec l'exacte vérité des faits, il l'auroient dit comme je l'ai écrit à ma femme, que tout le rapport de l'enthousiasme pour les artistes présents, j'ai été sans comparaison le plus remarqué et applaudi de tous les autres confrères et comme cela est juste et sera toujours le plus beau jour de ma vie je veux en attacher la date exacte pour que vous en partagiez encore toute ma joie, et pour compléter mon entier bonheur il vous faut là, mon bien cher ami.

que à l'institut j'ai tout fait pour que M^r^ Thevenin soit nommé en lui ramenant toute la voix qui étoient pour moi et sans le moindre doute. donc, j'ai eu plus de voix que la moitié encore ce que les journaux n'avoient pas osé dire parce qu'il était un peu à l'inverse de l'idée du jour. mais qui en pourrait pas, l'être autant plus l'institut. donc, je suis bien placé pour la prochaine élection, j'espère que pour le professorat que j'ai du prendre à un membre de l'institut attendu que pour concurrencer il faut l'être pour remplir cette place. mais je suis le seul qui ait des voix, et cela sans visites personnelles. Au surplus, cher monsieur, il est vrai que selon vos propres paroles, et pouvait peut-être dire comme cet autre, la mer est belle que je savais remuer cet sont vous qui me voulez tout cela, arrivé ici, toutes les petites positions, intérêts d'amour propre, avenir. sur mon compte qui pouvoient si facilement agiter l'opinion de tout le monde, et tout a été pour moi, on me tout donné sans que j'ai eu la peine de dire mot, ce qui me tient encore pour difficile et qui n'arrive pas souvent, et grâces au ciel je vais en tout cela j'avais sacrifié à la fainéantise d'un jour, l'intrigue, ce qui est tout répugnant à une âme délicate et fière. me voici dans une place que j'avais persuadé que est toujours un poste avancé avec courage et tenacité pour faire bien que l'on peut arriver et forcer à vous faire rendre toute justice et tout accorder honorablement, et cela, dans mon cœur je me rappellerai toute ma vie combien dans mes plus grandes, mais aussi jeunes difficultés, et de découragements de toute espèce vous m'avez soutenu et constamment encouragé dans ces sentiments dont je vous suis reconnaissant pour moi, vous avez recueilli tout de suite dans je vous fais hommage puisque vous y avez tout contribué.

Je prie Madame d'agréer l'expression de mon respectueux attachement et lui renouveller notre reconnaissance pour tant de bontés reçues d'elle et de la nouvelle part quelle veut de prendre à la gloire et au bonheur que nous a toujours donné. petit folio et nouveau amiable petite sœur.

je suis assez inquiet de n'avoir encore aucune nouvelle de mes caisses d'objets d'art — je vous remercie de tout ce que vous voudrez de notre voiture, je vous prie la terminer dans le cours de cette année. le salon n'a lieu que dans deux ans et dans elle y figurera bien certainement et de tout mon mieux. adieu cher monsieur, et excellent ami mille vous bien vos chers petits, aimés nous toujours, vous êtes bien sûr de nous, sommes environnés, que nous prions au ciel bien chez pour notre [illegible] rien ne vous a encore remplacé. dans notre cœur nous vous rappellons donc, que le 22 de ce mois j'y commence le printemps, espère qui vous fait apporter par votre présence le plus heureux avantage de vous revoir ici, notre vœu, et compte mais en attendant ce bienheureux moment avec une amitié bien sentie et bien dévouée

votre bien attaché serviteur et ami
pour la vie.

Adieu, je vous prie la bonté de me rappeler au souvenir de vos amis M^r^ et M^me^ Paquetti. Si bons pour moi et si intéressés à notre bonheur ce qui nous leur rendons bien et de tout notre cœur.

so that they could install themselves in their new-found situation. In the midst of this happy change of his fortunes, however, he did not forget those who had believed in him and helped him in difficult times, and had wholeheartedly wished him the best. M. and Mme Leblanc were among these friendly spirits, and the clearest indication of Ingres's gratitude is a letter now in the possession of the Institut Néerlandais in Paris (Figure 9). It is dated March 16, 1825 — just the time Ingres's affairs were improving. It is the only document known today in which the painter corresponds directly with his good patron. The letter, hitherto unknown, is published here with the kind permission of the Institut Néerlandais:

OPPOSITE

9. Letter from Ingres to Jacques-Louis Leblanc (1774-1846), French. Dated March 16, 1825. This letter was purchased as item number 123 at Auction Charavay, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, on February 12, 1969, by the Institut Néerlandais. Photograph: © Institut Néerlandais, Paris

Paris, March 16, 1825

Dear Sir and good friend,

I have taken a long time, it is true, to reply to all that your kind letter expressed for me in terms of your friendship and esteem, which I value so highly. I shall never be able to tell you how happy this makes me. To inspire in you, dear Sir, so much interest and such attachment is the most honorable and happiest thought of my life. Please be so good as to forgive my delay in expressing to you all of my gratitude. This delay is caused by the tiring life, tumultuous and busy, that I lead in Paris, which leaves me scarcely enough time to think of myself and to retire a bit with myself, with you, and with my dear memories of good Florence. For I am and shall be all my life and at every moment of it your most faithful Ingres, as you know him and know how he is for you and for everything concerning you. My heart, my memory, my eyes and ears are always yours and with you.

The person who will deliver this letter is M. de Cailleux,[1] Secretary General of the Museum, and editor of the beautiful publication about Normandy. From what he knows of your own self and of all the good things that you wish for me, he desires the honor of making your acquaintance in Florence, where he is going to enjoy all the remarkable art that the city contains. And aside from his personal merits, of which you will be a good judge, you will find in him, if I am not mistaken, the added one of being and having been on these recent occasions absolutely devoted to me, as shown by all sorts of favors he had done me because of his position; and he is amongst those in whom my modest worth has inspired a lively interest. And as I know that you, very dear Sir, share such regard, for which I am most grateful, I believe that for these various reasons meeting with M. de Cailleux cannot be anything but agreeable to you.

My good wife has returned here safely and you can well imagine that she has been thoroughly questioned about everything regarding you. These conversations always console us a bit for being deprived of you. Here we are still like birds on a branch and hope for nothing more than to be finally and really settled in a house. As for my studios, they won't be *built* for a year. But if necessary I can wait and content myself with a mediocre substitute. My situation in regard to my reputation could not

[1] Achille-Alexandre-Alphonse de Cailloux (1788-1876), called de Cailleux, was Secrétaire Général des Musées in the Ministère de la Maison du Roi under the Restoration. He wrote the part "Ancienne Normandie" in *Voyage pittoresque dans l'ancienne France*, published by Baron Taylor.

be better established. I have the Cross [of the Legion of Honor] and I won it, I might say, on the field of battle – three large and beautiful works,[2] other lesser works as I wish them, and a future both *certain* and honorable. In this respect I want you to know that if the newspapers had been able to say what happened in the session of the museum that was presided over by the king (Figure 10), and had been able to give the facts correctly, they would have said, as I wrote to my wife,[3] that with regard to public recognition by all the artists present I was without comparison *the most remarkably* applauded of all those honored. And as that was and perhaps shall remain the finest day of my life, I assure you of the absolute truth [of these facts] so that you can share all my joy. My happiness would have been complete, if you had been there, my very dear friends.

As for the Institute, I did everything to get M. Thévenin nominated, bringing to him all the votes that had been uncontestably for me. To be sure, I had more votes than Horace.[4] That too the newspapers did not feel they could say because I had to be sacrificed to the idol of the day who did not seem, however, to count for so much at the Institute. Therefore, I am well placed for the next election as well as for the *professorship,* which I must see to take from a member of the Institute, since by convention one has to be [a member of the Institute] in order to fill that position. But I am the only one with [enough] votes, and that without having sought them. Well, dear Sir, it is true that according to your own words and being perhaps able to say as that other one did: There, you have my paintings, for which I thank you, it is to you that I owe all this. Having arrived here, all the passions, the considerations of self-respect, the errors imputed to me that could so easily mislead people's opinions have been silenced. And everything has happened to me; I have been given everything without even having to ask, which would have been very difficult for me and which I would not have known how to do. Thank heaven, in all of this I have never made sacrifices to the fashion of the day, the intrigue, which is so repulsive to a delicate and proud soul. Here I am then, more persuaded than ever that it is always by persevering with courage and by being conscientiously determined that one can succeed and force oneself to render all the justice that is due and to acquire everything honorably. Certainly, dear Sir, I shall remember all my life how much you supported me in my worst days of difficulties and discouragements of every kind, and nobly encouraged me in these attitudes. Thus by your good friendship to me, you see me reaping a harvest that I dedicate to you since you have contributed so much to it.

I beg Madame to accept the expression of my respectful attachment and I renew to her our gratitude for so many favors received from her and for the new part she has just taken in the glory and the happiness she always wished us. Little Félix is really too charming, I love him with all my heart, as I do his dear little sisters.

I am rather worried at having still no news about my cases with works of art. I thank you for everything you say to me about our Venus. I would like to finish her in the course of this year. There won't be a Salon for another two and a half years. She will certainly be shown then and I shall have done the best I can.

[2] On May 13, 1825, Ingres wrote to his childhood friend Gilibert: "I have to paint frescoes for a large chapel in Saint-Sulpice, two large paintings at 6,000 francs each, one for the King and the other for the Cathedral of Autun." Only the painting for Autun, The Martyrdom of St. Symphorian, was executed.

[3] Letter from Ingres to his wife in Florence, written in Paris, January 15, 1825, published in Henry Lapauze, *Le Roman d'amour de M. Ingres* (Paris, 1910), pp. 281-287.

[4] The painter Horace Vernet received seventeen votes when Ingres was elected on June 25, 1825, with eighteen votes, as successor to Denon.

Goodbye, dear Sir and excellent friend, both of you take care of your health and continue to love us. Be assured of our most tender feelings in return and be assured that in spite of all the improvement and hopes by which we are surrounded, we nevertheless pay dearly for our separation from you. Nothing has replaced you yet in our hearts. We will remind you, therefore, that the 22nd of this month is the beginning of spring, a season that makes us hope from your promise that we will have the happy benefit of seeing you here again. Make haste and believe that while I await this longed-for moment I am, with deeply felt and most devoted friendship,

your most attached servant and friend for life

Ingres

Please, be kind enough to remember me to our friends M. and Mme Loqueyssie, so good to me and so interested in our happiness, reminding them that we wish them well with all our heart.

Thanks to the postscript, our knowledge of Ingres's circle of friends in Florence is enlarged by another couple. Their name should perhaps be remembered in connection with two portrait drawings — the famous sheets in the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge — that have not yet been convincingly identified. According to a recent interpretation, they represent Count Rodolphe Apponyi and his wife, but it is possible that the models are M. and Mme de Loqueyssie. Of the husband we know only that he was married to the painter Emilie Hebenstreit, who was born in 1793 in Dresden and died in 1863 in Paris. The Dresden Print Cabinet owns a portrait drawing of her made in 1834 by Vogel von Vogelstein, which shows a certain similarity to the portrait in the Fogg Museum, yet not strong enough to prove the identity. For the time being, therefore, we can only hint at the problem.

Attached to the letter of Ingres to M. Leblanc is a small note (Figure 9) in the hand of a grandson of M. and Mme de Loqueyssie, which states:

> Autograph letter from Ingres (painter) written to M. Le Blanc in Florence, which speaks of my grandfather and my grandmother de Loqueyssie (March 10, 1823 [sic] Paris), bought at the sale of Mme Place née Le Blanc January 23, 1896
>
> Paul de Loqueyssie

This little notice is interesting especially because it gives a precise date for Mme Place's auction. Mme Isaure Place was the Leblancs' second daughter, born in Paris on August 6, 1818. She kept Ingres's portraits of her parents to the end of her long life, and in 1896 they were bought by none other than Edgar Degas, whose friend Daniel Halévy noted this in his diary under the date of January 21, 1896: "Degas. Bought the Ingres." Identifying Mme Place's auction has not yet been successful; no such sale is mentioned in the *Répertoire des ventes* by the late Frits Lugt. In view of the fact, however, that the newly discovered Ingres letter has entered the Institut Néerlandais, which was

founded by Lugt and where his research is being pursued by others, we may hope to come closer to the solution of this small problem, the only remaining gap in the complete pedigree of the two masterworks in the Metropolitan Museum.

Translated from the German by Claus Virch

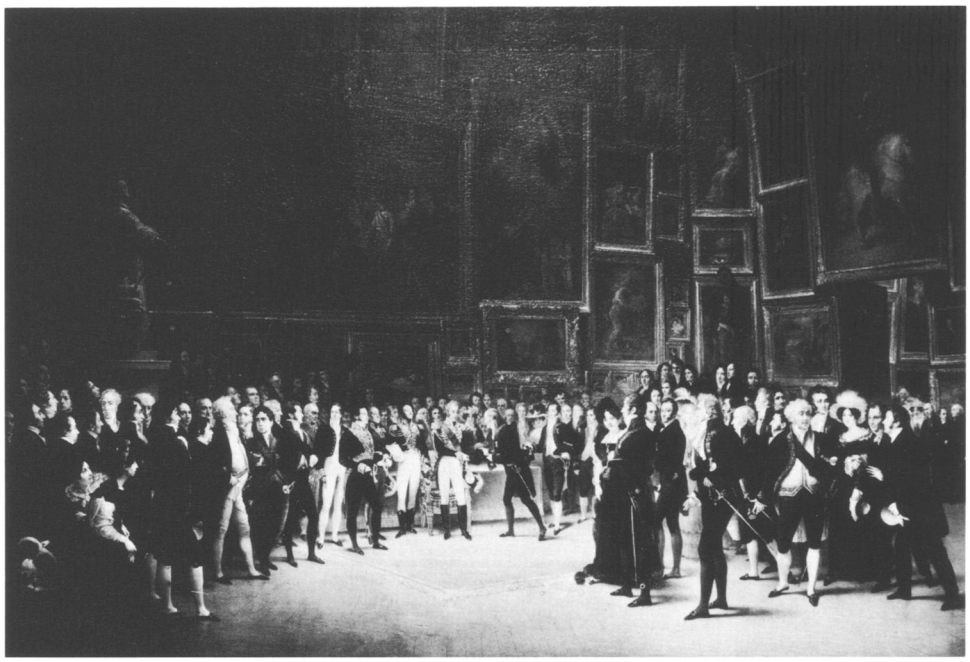
Notes and References

For additional information on Leblanc, see my article "Ingres und die Familie Leblanc" in *Du* 26, no. 300 (February 1966), pp. 121-134; on Thévenin, see my "Ingres und die Familien Thévenin und Taurel" in *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek,* no. 16 (1965), pp. 119-157.

The Fogg Museum's portrait drawings are illustrated and interpreted by Agnes Mongan in the catalogue *Ingres Centennial Exhibition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), nos. 55, 56.

Ingres's letter to Gilibert was quoted in *Ingres d'après une correspondance inédite,* by Boyer d'Agen (Paris, 1909), p. 126.

Halévy's note about Degas's purchase can be found in his book *Degas parle . . .* (Paris and Geneva, 1960), p. 97.



10. King Charles X Distributing Awards to the Artists at the End of the Salon of 1824, in the Great Salon of the Louvre, January 15, 1825, by François-Joseph Heim (1787-1865), French. Oil on canvas, 5 feet 8 1/8 inches x 8 feet 4 3/4 inches. Louvre, Paris. Photograph: Foto Hinz, Basel; © Conzett & Huber, Zurich

Scholarship on Cards

The Museum Catalogue

MARICA VILČEK *Chief Cataloguer*

People who might picture the Catalogue Division of the Registrar and Catalogue Department as a place where brochures are stacked from floor to ceiling would be surprised to know that this division neither issues nor sells catalogues. Instead, a visitor, if patient enough to locate this office in the basement of the north wing of the Museum, would find a long corridor whose walls are lined with neatly arranged file cabinets. These cabinets house about a million catalogue cards, which contain descriptions and reference information relating to almost all the objects owned by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Museum catalogue was started by Margaret A. Gash, a graduate of the Albany Library School, who came to the Metropolitan Museum in 1906 to keep records on works of art. This system, which in format resembles a library card catalogue, was an invaluable contribution by the Metropolitan to museum methods. Today we have one of the most extensive and comprehensive catalogues in the world.

Generally speaking, the cards for each object contain the Museum accession number, name of artist, title, country of origin, and period, along with a technical description including measurements, type of material, and condition. The cataloguers supplement this basic information with a record of ex-collections, and notes on the history of the object's execution, on its relationship to similar pieces, and on its iconography. Whenever possible, they support their findings with extensive reference to publications, exhibition catalogues, and archive documents. One set of catalogue cards, accompanied by a small record photograph, is filed in the main catalogue, and a duplicate set is sent to the relevant department. To keep the records up to date, additions and corrections to the catalogue cards are made as they become available.

What is included in catalogue cards varies with individual objects. The information available on some archaeological materials may be so scant as to warrant only a few lines on a single card, whereas for the twelfth-century Bury St. Edmunds ivory cross (recently shown in the exhibition *The Year 1200)* it fills no fewer than 121 cards.

To serve their function as a central source of data on all Museum objects, the catalogue cards must be organized in a systematic fashion. For example, to find Claude Monet's Terrace at Sainte Adresse, one would first go to the section containing the cabinets for Western art and the series of drawers devoted to paintings. Within the subclassification Paintings, French, the cards for this work would be filed under the artist's name.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve, and extend access to
The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
www.jstor.org

Accessibility of information is augmented by extensive cross-indexing. Index entries include names of artists, titles, types of objects, subjects depicted, iconography, provenance, and ex-collections. The usefulness of the index is manifold. For example, works in different media by a single artist will not all be found under one category in the main catalogue. A look into the index quickly helps to locate cards for every work in the collections done by that artist. Or a scholar might want to study all works of art in the Museum representing one subject, for instance, Perseus, or to locate one type of object, such as apostle spoons. He again would turn to the subject index for a quick answer.

Over a period of years, the Catalogue Division, which originally served merely a record-keeping function, has entered into a much closer cooperation with curatorial departments. It is now staffed with nine research cataloguers, each one specializing in one or two areas of museum work. The cataloguers hold master's degrees or the equivalent in art history, and their academic qualifications for appointment are scrutinized by a curatorial committee.

The cataloguing process usually starts with a careful study of newly acquired objects in the Registrar's storeroom. The following stage involves an often tedious study of literature and archive documents. Several weeks of research may be required to locate a single pertinent source. Controversial opinions may have to be clarified in consultations with specialists from inside and outside the Museum. Only then is the accumulated information condensed into the format of catalogue cards and sent to the appropriate department for approval by a member of the curatorial staff.

The complexity of the work involved can perhaps be best appreciated from actual examples. Two different approaches are shown in the accompanying descriptions of recent projects completed by Senior Cataloguer Marian G. Harrison and by Cataloguer Johanna Hecht.

Plate depicting the gateway to the Oxford Botanical Garden, Oxford, England. Chinese (made for the English market), about 1760. Hard-paste porcelain, diameter 9 inches. Purchase, Winfield Foundation Gift, 65.219

One of my major projects concerned a China-Trade plate datable to about 1760, depicting the gateway to the Oxford Botanical Gardens at Oxford, England. Research for this piece – comprising nineteen catalogue cards – took me to the New York Public Library, including the Annex, and the libraries of Columbia University.

The gateway on our plate consists of three bays separated by engaged, rusticated columns. The center bay is an open archway with a coat of arms on the keystone, and each side bay contains a statue niche. Above the bays is an inscribed frieze and a cornice. A portrait bust is in the center pediment above the gateway, and in each of three pediments are heraldic shields. I began the cataloguing with the following information: "Our plate appears to be after the engraved design by David Loggan in *Oxonia Illustrata,* 1675." My examination of this engraving showed a similar architectural plan except that the statues were absent and the doorway was shown closed rather than open. From *Oxonia Illustrata* it was possible to identify details of the garden walk seen through the archway, and the buildings on each side, namely, the library on the left and the greenhouse on the right.

I next consulted a variety of books dealing with the general history and layout of the Oxford gardens, from which I obtained the following information:

1. The date 1631 on the frieze refers to the year in which an agreement was drawn up between the founder, Henry Danvers, Earl of Danby, and the builder, Nicholas Stone.

2. The portrait bust in the central tympanum represents Henry Danvers. The two side statues – later additions financed out of a libel fine – are of Charles I and Charles II.

3. It was not possible to blazon the heraldry from the sketchily drawn coats of arms on the plate. In some of the texts, however, I found descriptions of the gate that included identifications: (on the keystone of the center bay) Danvers quartering Neville, (in the central pediment) cartouches of royal Stuart arms and swags, (in the left pediment) St. George, (in the right pediment) Oxford University.

After my examination of the source books, I went on to determine the identity of the foreground figure by making a comparative study of people associated with the garden. One description – of the second gardener and botany professor, Jacob Bobart the elder (1596-1680) – seemed to fit. "He was famed for his long beard . . . also for his goat which accompanied him on his walks abroad." Bobart was appointed to the post in 1632, a year that would be in keeping with the date of the gateway. My follow-up on two portraits of Bobart strengthened this identification. The first was an engraving by Michael Burghers that I was unable to locate but whose detailed description was a confirmation of the identification. The second was a small engraving of Bobart standing in front of the gateway. It appeared opposite the frontispiece to the poem *Vertumnus,* an epistle written in 1713 about Bobart when he was professor of botany. It was an almost exact representation – not only of the figure but of the entire scene. Here was the source for our plate – a most exciting find!

MARIAN G. HARRISON *Senior Cataloguer*

Cabinet (beeldenkast). Dutch, XVII century. Oak, height 8 feet. Fletcher Fund, 64.81

This elaborately carved cabinet or *beeldenkast* is an outstanding example of a type of object made for the homes of wealthy Dutch burghers in the 1600s – the century of Holland's greatest commercial prosperity. As cupboards for the storage of linens or other household objects, often forming part of the dowry, *beeldenkasts* belonged primarily to the wife's domain; in this case the rich iconography strikes one as intended to instruct and inspire the lady of the house in the pursuit of virtues particularly prized by the seventeenth-century Dutch bourgeoisie.

After the preliminary cataloguing had been completed, the first step was to identify the subjects of the carvings. Six caryatid figures personifying the Christian Virtues flank the doors on two levels, guarding the family's belongings. Those on the upper stage represent the higher, so-called Theological Virtues, Faith, Charity, and Hope. The relief panels between them show the Judgment of Solomon, exemplifying great wisdom, and the Queen of Sheba, illustrating the proper female attitude of obeisance to the wise man.

On the lower stage is the story of Joseph, a saga dear to the hearts of the canny Dutch, depicting the triumph of acumen and prudence. The caryatids flanking the lower doors portray the Cardinal Virtues, Strength, Justice, and Prudence. Supporting them are drums carved with biblical exemplars: Samson, Judith, and King David.

During my close examination of the piece, I unexpectedly discovered an intriguing detail that had previously been overlooked: a minute, partly illegible, inscription on the open book in front of David clearly states the date 1622 as the year in which the cabinet was carved.

The next step in the cataloguing process was to trace the iconographical sources of the carvings. Since a similar *beeldenkast* in Amsterdam has reliefs illustrating another biblical theme, after engravings of Marten van Heemskerck, I attempted to locate some of Heemskerck's illustrations of the Joseph story in the Museum's print room. The one example I found did bear a distinct resemblance to the corresponding scene on our cabinet, but the similarity was not as marked as one would have liked. The question here was whether our carver took his own liberties with Heemskerck's prints or whether he was working from an as yet unidentified engraved variant of them.

By great good fortune, the next step, the search for comparable objects, uncovered a cabinet in a Hamburg museum catalogue bearing carvings almost identical to the ones on ours. The two sets of carvings are, in fact, closer to each other than either is to the Heemskerck print.

Uncertainty still remains as to whether this resemblance points to a common iconographical source, or to a common workshop. Resolution of this question is awaiting further investigation and evaluation of the catalogue material.

JOHANNA HECHT *Cataloguer*

Scholarship on Disks

The Museum's Computerized Catalogue

HANNI MANDEL *Staff Assistant — Computer Systems*

The catalogue is not static; together with the Registrar files it is the only centralized record of the first hundred years of scholarship about the Museum's holdings, and it is constantly growing and changing. To keep abreast of the enormous growth of the volume, as well as to be able to offer, in time, more extensive indexing ability and other scholarly material for curators, public, and administration, the department has turned to computer technology.

In July 1969, the Registrar and Catalogue Department began automating its academic records. The first rather lengthy phase of this effort was to design a method for conversion of the existing accession and catalogue cards. This system has now been developed and is firmly established.

The "data converters," who translate the scholarly work of the cataloguers into machine-readable form, all work part-time; they are students whose main qualifications are a resourceful intelligence, patience, enthusiasm, some typing ability, and cultural interests, or, better yet, a major in art history. There have been a number of Urban Corps interns, some of whom graduated to Museum employment when their internships ended.

The first step in conversion is "editing" the cards, that is, making light pencil notations as reminders of how data should be coded for the machine. For every unit of information about an object, an "annotation class" must be assigned. It tells the machine what type of information a unit is: 70 is the name of an artist, 32 a generic type, 48 a material or technique. After a few weeks of practice, the data converters find that most annotation classes come easily without reminders. Only the less frequently used ones require notation on the cards, and obscure units of data that can be recognized or interpreted only by a specialist in one of the varied cultures represented in our collection must be researched before an annotation class can be supplied. This is where resourcefulness comes in. Sandy Hernández and Dale Seecof, who have been working on the conversion for more than a year, have become expert at ferreting out the meanings of difficult, obscure, or foreign terms; or the modern geographic equivalents of vaguely defined, ancient cultural areas (modern equivalents are used in addition to local, ancient, or historical place names); or the dates included in a historic — or prehistoric — period to make chronological retrieval possible, even if it involves several millennia; or extrapolating from a vast number of stylistic designations the place names, periods, techniques, and materials these names often indicate.

With great care, patience, and understanding the edited data is entered on a typewriter terminal connected to a commercial time-sharing system. The terminal, thanks to its connections with a time-sharing system, has a life of its

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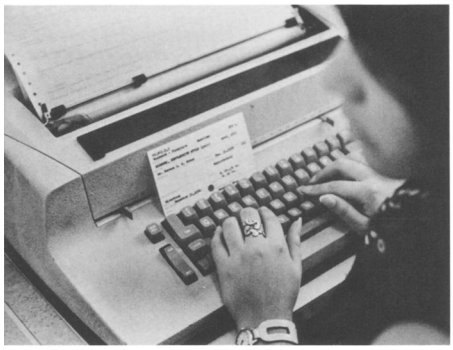

own: it can talk back by typing out messages, and play the temperamental prima donna when there is a breakdown in the time-sharing system, in the telephone line or acoustic coupler that are the intermediary components, or in the terminal itself. It can allow entered material to be corrected and additional data to be inserted. The converter must be alert to all the terminal's signals and symptoms: when a lack of sensitivity results in the failure to take proper corrective action, much work can be lost.

Once a quantity of data is entered, a command is given via the terminal to have an overnight print-out done at the time-sharing service installation. The print-out is proofed, and the data, still stored in the system, is corrected and then transferred to magnetic tape, all via the terminal. The tape is sent to the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where the data is processed further by computer and stored on disks in association with the Museum Computer Network data bank.

Ninety-five per cent of the "raw data" concerning 1960s accessions has been converted. It is considered raw data because not all problems have been resolved: some identifications were tentative; many photo negative numbers or measurements were missing; the person with the answer to a specific question was unavailable at the time of conversion; through the years cataloguing inconsistencies had crept in as a department changed terminology or reorganized classifications. All this raw data must now be refined, and the computer can help in this task. For instance, it can compile an index of terms from which a department can decide either to retain a varied nomenclature or discard one word in favor of another. This phase — eliminating current gaps and developing a system for continuous updating of data — has just begun.

While the complexities of computerization have been tremendous, the expected bonus will be sufficient compensation: the rich fund of scholarly work in the catalogue can be disseminated to a vastly increased audience, thus helping to fulfill the Museum's goal of sharing its collected knowledge as well as its treasures.

Photographs:
Michael Fredericks, Jr.

The Art of Transporting Art

New Solutions to Old Problems

INGE HECKEL

Associate Secretary, 100th Anniversary Committee

Small museums across the country rely heavily on traveling exhibitions to supplement their programs. With the vast number of new museums that have sprung up around the country – some say, a new museum every day – it has become increasingly difficult for them to gather permanent collections of the size and scope required to maintain an interested audience and community support. The circulating exhibition is a necessary way of rounding out their programs and making their museums living institutions.

As part of the Centennial, the Museum wanted to make more of its resources available to other museums here and abroad. A dichotomy immediately became apparent. Although we wished to lend our works of art, we were faced with the difficulty of transporting them safely and efficiently. How could we find better ways of packing, handling, and transporting art, especially for circulating exhibitions? We were concerned not only with improving the methods of shipping a single masterpiece, but also with the recognizably different problems involving many objects making a number of stops. Because we felt it was the responsibility of large institutions like the Metropolitan to lend to small ones, we were determined to make it easier and safer.

As we suspected that this was not a problem exclusive to the Metropolitan, we called three major institutions that have established programs for circulating exhibitions – the Smithsonian Institution, The Museum of Modern Art, and the American Federation of Arts. Our instincts were correct – the problems we had experienced were shared by all three, and in October 1967 a symposium was held here to investigate better ways of packing and handling works of art for traveling exhibitions. At this meeting, we were fortunate in having representatives of the insurance, transportation, and packaging industries, as well as representatives of other cultural institutions. We all hoped that by exploring our mutual requirements and sharing our knowledge and experience, we might be able to find a solution.

The meeting convinced us that there were indeed ways of solving these problems. Those representing industry made it clear that packaging techniques employed for commercial use could be translated for art needs, and that these same procedures could be adapted to suit containerization methods already widely used by the transportation industry. Our insurance advisors were keen on such suggestions as containerization as a means of lessening the incidence of damage, ultimately reducing our insurance rates.

At this point the Metropolitan formally initiated a project to find improved methods for packaging and handling works of art for travel, and the trustees approved funds for research and study. Additional financial and technical support was contributed by individuals and corporations.

The project director's task during the first three months of the study was to research five basic areas: specific problems in the shipment of art objects; current packaging methods and materials being used, including those for transporting delicate instruments; new materials or methods that might be developed; problems in cargo handling of water, land, and air carriers; and the insurance industry's opinions and needs concerning the underwriting of works of art during travel.

During the next six months, many materials were presented and tested. These included heavy-duty corrugated cardboard to replace wooden cases, urethane loose-fill packing materials, a foaming-in-place technique for securing objects in packing containers, and foam sheets of polyethylene, polyurethane, and polystyrene for insulation. Our considerations for all new materials included tests for temperature and humidity control, and for vibra-

The Art Pak as it is used for paintings: the polyurethane corner cushions will be held in place by elastic straps attached to the pegboard backing. Other inside fittings are being developed so that the fiberglass shell can accommodate three-dimensional objects or be used for self-contained exhibitions

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tion, compression, and shock damage. But none quite met the stringent requirements we had set. Although we learned a great deal as to which materials might be useful and which we must avoid, we still had to do more.

In the fall of 1969 the Poly-Con Division of the Whitehead & Kales Company in Detroit, which had been working with industrial containerization for some time, expressed an interest in helping us with the project. The Museum established the standards necessary for an art container and Poly-Con then began working on designs to meet these requirements.

The result of this collaboration was the Poly-Con Art Pak – a fiberglass container with an adjustable tray system inside to which the works of art are attached. After exhaustive laboratory observation, we felt that the container was ready to be tested with a traveling show. The Metropolitan's exhibition *Prints by Nine New York Painters* had left the Museum in traditional wooden crates in February 1970; in August, before the show left Richmond, Virginia, the prints were transferred to the new Art Paks. From Richmond it went to Allentown, Pennsylvania, and then to Jerusalem. At the end of November it left Israel to continue its tour of cities in the United States.

As we use the container we continually find improvements and refinements, and this program may ultimately revolutionize the means of transporting works of art. Most important, we hope that these improved methods of packaging will be used to fulfill the increasingly important educational functions of museums. If exhibitions can more easily be brought into communities, the vast resources of museums can further the enjoyment and education of a greater number of people. This form of decentralization – making museums more accessible – will help to solve some of the problems that face the museums today.

Pays-bas et Sardaigne, by Joseph Cornell (born 1903), American. Collage with coins on Masonite, 12 1/8 x 9 1/8 inches. Lent by Joseph Cornell, L 1970.1

Collage by Joseph Cornell

Joseph Cornell has spent three decades making his well-loved boxes in which fantasy and realism are joined in a shallow, magical space. He deplores the way our culture throws everyday things away without first trying to transform them into something valuable, precious: he finds that a pile of *Life* magazines can be a gold mine if one chooses elements from its pages and arranges them into works of art.

Cornell's love of both the ordinary – the popular life of our time – and the extraordinary – great paintings, sculpture, ballet, opera, and poetry – is gracefully expressed in his boxes. This sensibility is equally evident in his collages, some forty of which will go on view in the Museum in December. While small groups of these collages have occasionally been exhibited before, this is the first comprehensive showing. These lovely works, executed in the past five years, continue and deepen many of the investigations into specific themes, such as hotels, constellations, bees, and Renaissance children, that have fascinated the artist for decades.

HENRY GELDZAHLER
Curator of Twentieth Century Art

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The Main Building: Open weekdays, except Tuesdays, 10-5; Tuesdays 10-10; Sundays and holidays 1-5. Telephone information: 736-2211. The Restaurant is open weekdays 11:30-2:30; Tuesday evenings 5-9; Saturdays 11:30-3:45; Sundays 12:00-3:45; closed holidays.

The Cloisters: Open weekdays, except Mondays, 10-5; Sundays and holidays 1-5 (May-September, Sundays 1-6). Telephone: WAdsworth 3-3700. There is a Pay-What-You-Wish admission charge to the Main Building and The Cloisters; there is no charge for special exhibitions. Members free.

Membership: Information will be mailed on request.

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